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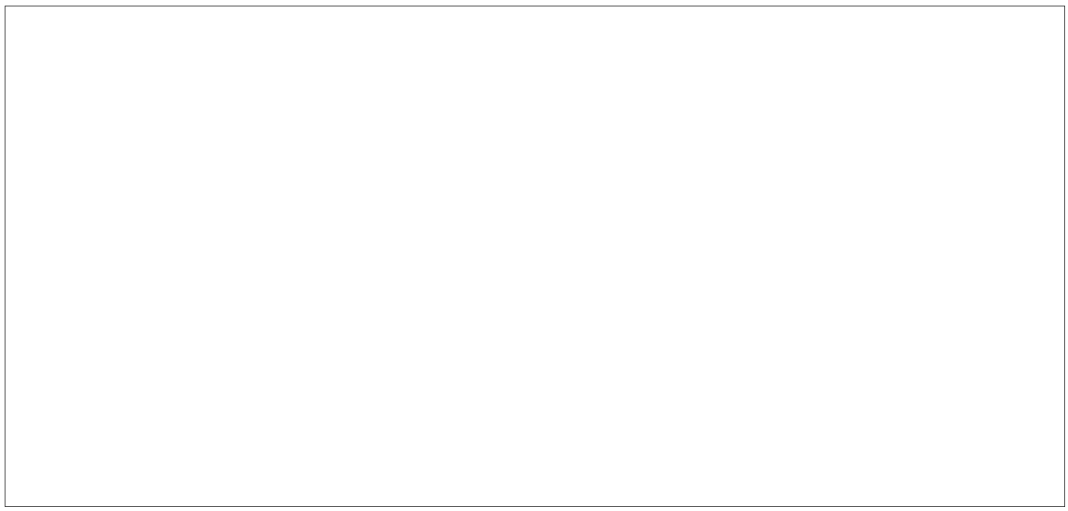

ARGENTINA: Air force commander in chief ousted by rebellious officers 8

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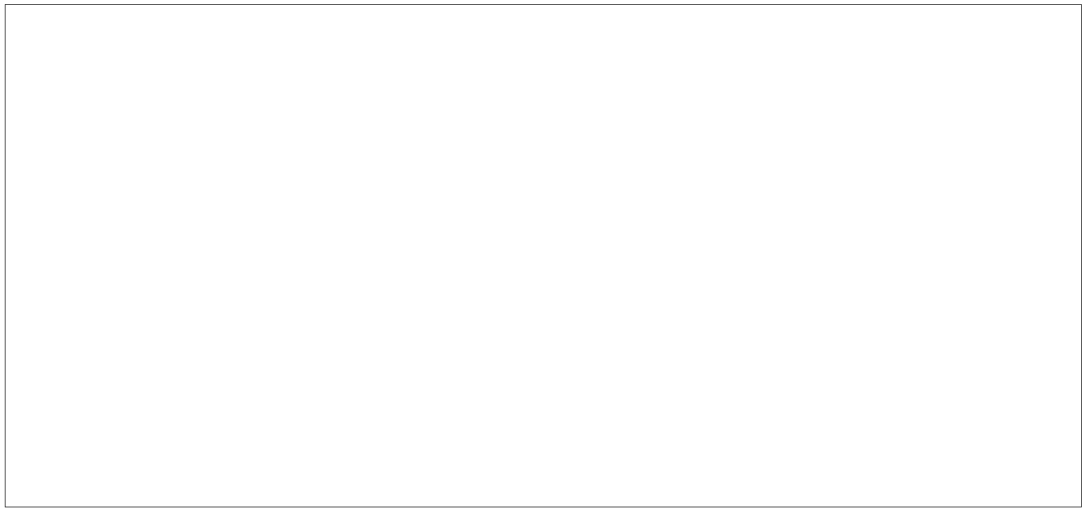

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ARGENTINA

A rebellion yesterday by air force officers has reportedly resulted in the replacement of the air force commander in chief, General Fautario. He has been succeeded by General Orlando Ramon Agosti, reportedly a staunch anti-Peronist.

The officers, led by General Orlando Cappellini, seized Fautario and others and held them for several hours. The rebellious officers said their action was motivated by dissatisfaction over recent "arbitrary" promotions and transfers. Fautario has never been particularly popular among his subordinates; moreover, some who considered him too pro-Peronist may have thought this an ideal opportunity to join in an effort against him.

Cappellini's move was probably part of a running feud he had had with his commander. Fautario reportedly had learned that Cappellini was involved in coup plotting and tried to force him to retire or accept an undesirable overseas assignment.

In an effort to justify and gain support for their effort, the rebellious officers issued communiques urging other military services to join them in seeking a "new Christian morality" instead of a discredited national leadership. We have seen no sign that navy or army officers responded in any way.

The rebellious officers apparently planned their move to coincide with the absence from the country of the army commander in chief, General Videla, who is said to oppose a military move against the government at this time. They hoped that with Videla gone, they could persuade the other services to back—or at least not oppose—their effort.

If the new commander is indeed anti-Peronist, his accession may speed the day when the three armed services can agree on a means to oust the discredited regime.

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